



Defying gravity with a Neck Lift

Introduction and Anatomy.

One of the first areas in which ageing can manifest is the neck. The effects of gravity make the soft tissues of the neck sag and sun damage to the skin enhances the ageing effect. As people mature, there is also a tendency to accumulate fat in this area which worsens these undesirable features. In youth, a sharp angle between the area under the chin and the neck (called the cervico-mental angle) is evident and this is determined by the position of the voicebox in the neck. In some where the voicebox tends to be lower in the neck, the angle between the chin and the neck is not sharply defined leading to a less acute angle between the neck and the chin. The degree of improvement obtained by surgery is dependent on the cervico-mental angle in youth. The aim of surgery is to disguise the scars around the ears and under the chin to make them totally inconspicuous.

Surgery.

Surgery to improve the neck is primarily aimed at reversing the above-mentioned changes. The most important aspect is to elevate the soft tissues back to their position of youth. This may be achieved by elevating the tough supporting tissues of the neck and securing this tissue to fixed, immobile points in the temple region and around the ears. Usually associated with changes in the neck are changes in the jowls which are also improved by this procedure. The elevation



Before

After



Before

After

of this tissue lessens and at times can completely remove, the two bands on the front of the neck from the platysma muscle which encircles the neck and extends onto the face. If the platysma bands are particularly prominent in the front of the neck, these can be surgically removed from under the skin. This is undertaken in association with surgical removal of fat under the chin called the submental area. Fat deposits further back under the jawline are best addressed by undertaking liposuction. This surgery can take place under local anaesthetic, intravenous sedation (rather like a general anaesthetic) or general anaesthetic according to patient's wishes.

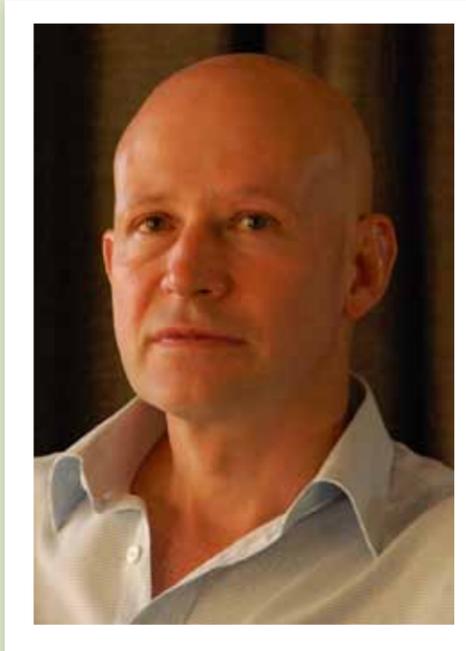
Preparation for surgery.

Patients receive as much information as they wish in both writing and verbally from both the Surgeon and the Cosmetic Nurse over as much time as required. It is important to declare any medical problems and to stop smoking as it inhibits normal healing. It is also important to stop any aspirin containing substances and all herbal remedies before surgery. A thorough explanation of the surgery preoperatively minimises unexpected surprises postoperatively.

Postoperatively.

The post-operative course can be uncomfortable for the first day or two but discomfort settles rapidly. It is important to eat and drink normally and not engage in any strenuous physical activity with domestic duties kept to a minimum. If utilised drains are removed within a day or two of surgery and sutures removed at one week. A compression garment is worn postoperatively for two-three weeks and bruising has usually settled by the tenth day but can be readily disguised with make-up after one week.

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